DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 153 212 CS 204 032

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TITLE Poll Reporting, Precision Journalism, and the 1972 Presidential Campaign: A Study of the American Newspaper.
PUB DATE Jul 76
NOTE 20p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism (59th, College Park, Maryland, July 31-August 4, 1976)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Information Dissemination; Journalism; News Media; *Newspapers; *News Reporting; *Public Opinion; *Surveys; *Validity
IDENTIFIERS *Polls

ABSTRACT

The public opinion poll stories that appeared in six major United States newspapers during the 1972 Presidential campaigns provide the basis for this social science analysis. Every polling story reported in the sample newspapers during the one month time frame was checked against the eight criteria of the Opinion Research Corporation. These criteria pose the following questions: Who was interviewed? How many people were interviewed? How were the people interviewed selected? How were the interviews conducted? When was the interviewing done? How were the questions worded? Who conducted the poll? and What was the confidence interval (range of possible error)? The analysis rates each newspaper separately on a scale of eight, with one point possible for each of the criteria. Results suggest that none of the papers did a genuinely scientific survey and none apparently attempted to do one. The analysis indicates a need in American journalism to scientifically report poll results and, at the same time, deflate poll importance by stressing clearly the limitations involved in obtaining accurate, reliable poll results. (MAI)

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POLL REPORTING, PRECISION JOURNALISM, AND THE 1972 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN:

A Study of the American Newspaper

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Introduction

Public opinion polls are assuming a formidable place in the reporting, and possibly in the results, of modern political campaigns. In consequence, there is a great need for the average citizen to understand what polling is all about, what it can and can't tell us, and which polls are reliable. And it is to a large extent the responsibility of the newspaper, as a major liason between pollister and public, to help us toward that kind of understanding. It seems elementary that American newspapers should provide intelligent, accurate reporting of political polls. Advanced scientific knowledge is not required. Neither does it demand extensive scientific training for a newspaper to go one step further and conduct its own local or regional surveys, offering its readers valuable, reliable information on a wide variety of topics. Both of these ideas, obviously, are based on the notion that journalists ought to have a good working knowledge of social science.

There are two bases for this sort of argument. First, what is known as the "Social Responsibility" theory of the press, which, as presented in the Hutchins Committee report, called on newspapers to give their readers "the truth behind the facts." For those who find this phrase vague or inapplicable, there could be no better example than the reporting of political polls. Too often, as this paper will demonstrate, readers are not even given all of the relevant facts, and even more frequently are they denied the "truth" or significance behind them.

The second basis is what Philip Meyer has popularized as "Precision Journalism," the application of social science research methods to reporting. Meyer's ideal is the reporter who will be able to design, carry out, and clearly report his own surveys and polls, not be dependent on Harris' or Gallup's. A corollary

of Meyer's logic is that the editor/reporter who handles a story on someone else's poll should be able to evaluate its reliability and worth on the basis of his own knowledge. Such an independent, critical stance is a tradition of American journalism, but old habits die hard, and precision journalism has not exactly taken the profession by storm. How far has it come? How well and how often do major American newspapers report public opinion polls or conduct their own? This paper will attempt to answer those questions.

Methodology

Focusing on the 1972 Presidential elections, the Oct. 1 - Nov. 5 reportage of six American dailies--The Atlanta Constitution, The Los Angeles Times, The Milwaukee Journal, The New York Times, The St. Louis Post-Dispatch, and The Washington Post--were analyzed as a case study of the state of social science in American newspaper journalism.[1] The six papers were a purposive sample; the smaller-town periodicals should probably not be expected to be in the forefront of precision journalism (though some of them have been), and it is logical to examine leading papers such as the Washington Post and New York Times.

My basic methodology was simple. Every poll story appearing in the sample newspapers during the chosen time frame was checked against the eight criteria of the Opinion Research Corporation (ORC). The ORC criteria, which will be reviewed below, were drawn up as guidelines for journalists and newspaper readers as well

[1]The newspapers were selected by Dr. Maxwell McCombs, now of Syracuse University, whose students at the University of North Carolina collected the relevant articles. Students participating in the project were: Peter Barnes, Mike Morgan, Betty Brady, Phil Gurkin, Toby Hanell, Jody Meacham, Diane Smith, Mike Jones, Dean Gerdes, Waitus Hardin, Jessica Hanchar, Bill Wallace, Dave Stevens, Anthony Steward, Barbara Elliot, Penny Muse, Nancy Huntley, Garnet Bass, Carol Wilson, Sybil Jones, Karen Bachmann, and "Santa."

as for social scientists, and therefore were judged appropriate for a study of this type. "Poll story" was defined as an article describing or discussing any public opinion poll concerning the 1972 elections, whether conducted by the newspaper itself or another source.

Every article examined was given one point for each ORC criterion it met, with a penalty of .5 for vagueness or incompleteness. Thus an article that was "perfect" by social science standards would have a score of 8. In evaluating the performance of each newspaper, I have concentrated on two types of numerical scores: first, the average score per story (the total number of points in that newspaper's stories divided by the number of stories considered), and second, the total points given for each of the eight criteria. This gives a general picture of the paper's overall competence in poll reporting, followed by a closeup of its particular strengths and weaknesses.

It might be argued that the eight criteria should not be given equal weight. True, some are of greater scientific importance than others, but as a novice in the field, I did not feel competent to devise a weighting system. Nor could one have been applied in a standardized fashion. Sometimes the answer to one question effects the relative importance of answers to others. In any case, the single-point method employed has the virtue of facilitating comparisons.

Before beginning the individual newspaper analyses, it might be helpful to review the ORC criteria. Note that the final question has been changed to include the important concept of "confidence interval."

1. Who was interviewed? Political polling or sampling is always intended to represent a larger population. It is vital, particularly for purposes of comparing different polls, that we be told precisely what that population was. Political polls, one finds, are variously stated to be of "adults," "registered voters,"

"likely voters," and even "persons." Or, of course, the point can be ignored altogether. I have given each story one point for mentioning "who was interviewed," but have reduced the score to .5 when the information is given in imprecise form and not clarified elsewhere in the story. For example, who is an "adult?" Merely a person over 18, or a citizen over 18, or a registered voter? And how was a person determined to be a "likely voter?" Such definitional differences can produce significant variations in poll results, and the citizen has the right to know them.

2. How many people were interviewed? A sample's size is directly related to its margin of possible error. Perhaps the average reader will neither know this nor care to know, but no informed person can evaluate survey reliability without it. It dosen't take much space to tell us this and in the interest of complete, responsible reporting it ought to be routinely included. I've given my articles one point each for doing so, .5 for vagueness ("several thousand").

3. How were the people interviewed selected? This is absolutely vital information. The method of selection can give us a good idea as to whether or not the survey or poll is likely to be genuinely representative of the population it claims to describe. The basic distinction here is between non-probability sampling, where the interviewer personally selects the individuals involved, and probability sampling, which gives every person in the sample population a known likelihood of selection. If at any stage of the sampling process interviewees are chosen on a haphazard basis, there is a serious problem of bias and one couldn't even calculate the degree of sampling error. Thus this single criterion could identify a probably dubious procedure. On the rare occasions when it was mentioned, I gave the article one point; .5 for a vague effort in the right direction; zero for such lofty evasions as "scientifically selected."

4. How were the interviews conducted? The in-person interview is usually by far the most reliable method. Telephone interviews are biased against those who can't afford phones or have unlisted numbers; mail questionnaires have a lower return rate and there is no way to know if the non-returners are in themselves a representative sub-sample (they probably aren't). Therefore: one point for mentioning the interviewing method, but only .5 when a mail or telephone survey was used and its shortcomings weren't mentioned.

5. When was the interviewing done? Particularly in a major election, a wide range of foreign and domestic events could have an effect on poll trends. This can't be pinpointed unless we know exactly when the interviewing was done. One point for inclusion, only .5 for "mid-October" or "most recent_____poll."

6. How were the questions worded? This is where a pollster with an ax to grind can subtly bias his results. It's important to know if party affiliation was mentioned, if titles were used ("Mr. Nixon" or "President Nixon"?), and if questions were in positive or negative form. Even a well-meaning but inexperienced pollster, such as a newspaper reporter, could bias the responses in this way, and the reader ought to be able to judge the matter for himself. One point for verbatim listing of questions; because of the importance of exact wording, no points for paraphrasing. Even the worst story would have to give you some idea of the question asked.

7. Who conducted the poll? Judgment of reliability shouldn't rise or fall on this question, but it never hurts to know and it always hurts not to know. One point for inclusion, .5 for vagueness.

8. What was the confidence interval (range of possible error)? The ORC's eighth criterion was "Were any special analytical or statistical procedures used?"

It's a worthwhile point but has far less importance to a newspaper audience than the range of possible error, which is badly-needed information in light of the trend toward obsessive concern with poll results. In the course of this project, I frequently saw such headlines as "McGovern Up Two Points In Poll" and "Nixon Leads Poll By 20 Points." These are so misleading as to be just plain wrong. No poll or survey ever done was guaranteed accurate to the exact point. But if the probability sampling method was used, the exact degree of possible error can be calculated and given to the reader. The range of error is plus-or-minus a given number from the figure quoted in the article; thus if Gallup says that 65% of the voters approve of Mr. Nixon's handling of Vietnam, he is actually giving only the midpoint in a possible range of, say, 61-69%, +-4. The regular citation of confidence intervals would keep the reader (and the politician) from undue concern with minor fluctuations in midpoints.

Omission of this criterion is in my opinion a serious mistake, for it leads to an inaccurate picture of what a poll can tell us and encourages a quasi-mystical reverence for poll results. It's easy to see how in a closer contest than the Nixon-McGovern election an apparent "gap" between candidates could be literally meaningless. In this analysis, there was one point given for inclusion, .5 for inclusion in an incorrect or misleading form.

The Atlanta Constitution

The Atlanta Constitution published twenty-two articles between October 1 and November 5, 1972 that discussed polls and the upcoming elections. The average story got exactly 2.8 points of a possible eight, meeting less than half of the ORC criteria. Breakdown by criteria will show the paper's areas of particular strength and weakness; refer to the chart on p. 7.

All Newspapers and ORC Criteria

Raw Figures

	# of Stories	Who	How Many	Selection	Conduct	When	Wording	By Who	Conf. Int.	Average points per story
At. Const.	22	7	13	0	5	12.5	8	16	1	2.8
LA Times	31	20.5	22	0	7	21.5	3	30	2.5[2]	3.5
Mil. Jnl.	19	8	8.5	1	5.5	13	4	17	1	3.0
N.Y. Times	22[3]	16	18	1	5.5	13	1	22.5	6	3.5
St.L.P-D	134	9	10.5	0	3.5	9	4.5	12	1	3.5
Wash. Pst.	21	15	18	0	11.5	19	7.5	21	9.5	4.8
Average points per criterion	—	12.6	15	.3	6.3	14.7	4.7	19.8	3.5	

Percentages

	Who	How Many	Selection	Conduct	When	Wording	By Who	Conf. Int.	Average points per story
At. Const.	31.8	59.0	0	22.7	56.8	36.3	72.7	4.5	35.5
LA Times	66.1	70.9	0	22.5	69.3	9.6	96.7	8.3	43
Mil. Jnl.	42.1	44.7	5.2	28.9	68.4	21.0	89.4	5.2	38.1
N.Y. Times	66.6	75.0	4.1	22.9	54.1	4.1	93.7	25.0	43.1
St.L.P-D	64.2	75.0	0	25.0	64.2	34.6	85.7	7.1	44.5
Wash.Pst.	71.4	85.7	0	54.7	90.4	35.7	100	45.2	60.4
Average points per criterion	47.3	68.3	1.5	29.4	66.3	23.5	89.7	15.9	—

[2]Out of 30 stories; the sampling method used in one precluded the use of sampling error.

[3]24 for percentage purposes; three stories discussed two polls each.

[4]14 for percentage purposes; one story discussed two polls.

The strongest area, clearly, is "by who," simply telling the reader who conducted the poll, although six stories didn't even tell him that much. Readers find out how many people were interviewed and when in about half the stories. Slightly over one-third of the stories give the exact wording of the questions. This will prove to be the highest percentage among the six newspapers and is directly attributable to the prominence of Louis Harris in the Constitution's pages. "Who" was interviewed is described, also, about one third of the time, how the interview was conducted about one-fourth of the time, the confidence interval once, and the selection method, never. Since all these bits of information belong in every thorough report of a poll, it adds up to a pretty poor performance. Moreover, the newspaper conducted no surveys of its own, with one possible exception.

In terms of content, twelve of the twenty-two stories were about the Harris poll. Gallup made a single appearance and was discussed in one column. Other sources, each appearing once, were WSB-TV, New York Times correspondents, Mervin Field of the California Poll, an unnamed Minnesota source, Sindlinger and Co., the Portland Oregonian, an unnamed regional source, and maybe the Atlanta Constitution. The last-named refers to an October 13 story on voter apathy, which in terms of the eight criteria tells us only that it was conducted by telephone (with no mention of ensuing bias). We don't know who conducted the survey, who they spoke to, how they selected who they spoke to, when they spoke to them, etc. The story sounds as if a Constitution reporter handled the survey, but he perhaps wisely forbore to admit to the deed. There is simply no excuse for this sort of story, on either social science or traditional journalistic grounds. Three other stories gave only one of the eight points, and one story

managed to give none at all. The best showing was one of Harris' reports, hitting 5.5, but Harris stories were quite uneven and all suffered from Harris' determination to use the phrase "likely voters" without an attempt at definition. On the plus side, these stories usually gave the precise wording of the questions used.

In general, this newspaper would have benefited from a better variety of pollsters and a much better awareness of the ORC guidelines.

The Los Angeles Times

Here there is a noticeable improvement in sheer quantity. The LA Times printed thirty-one stories of the relevent sort, more than any of the other newspapers. But qualitatively, the improvement over the Constitution is less dramatic; the Times' stories average 3.5 of the eight criteria.

Again, "by who" appears most often, in all but one story. "How many," "when," and "who" all do fairly well, mentioned in about two thirds of the stories. But then there's a big drop to "conduct," in less than one fourth the stores, "wording" in only three of them, "confidence interval" properly in only two, and "selection" in none.

But, given this obvious ignorance of social science, the LA Times does a conscientious job of poll reporting. There's a first-rate variety of pollsters; Gallup appears frequently, as do Mervin Field and Daniel Yankelovitch, who did election surveys for Time magazine and the New York Times. And the LA Times, along with the Washington Post, the Boston Globe, the Chicago Sun-Times, the Houston Chronicle, Newsday, and the Philadelphia Bulletin, commissioned Peter

Hart's researchers to do a series of fascinating surveys of sub-sections of the electorate, such as the affluent, older, or Catholic voter. Unfortunately, the Time's articles based on this research are generally well below ORC standards, but still they represent a step in the right direction.

The LA Times also did two stories apparently based on its own surveys. The first, printed Oct. 24, was a survey of a bellwether county. There are many lively remarks by county residents and some interesting background on their voting records, but there's no clear identifiction of who conducted the survey, and we are only told the type and number of persons contacted. A story printed Oct. 12 describes a survey of Los Angeles Democrats, conducted by the newspaper. it's a decent reporting job, telling us by who, when, how, how many and what types of people were interviewed. But the story shows two errors of procedure that badly mar the "precision" of this journalism. First, it sounds like a quota sample, in which the reporter was told to find a given number of, say, blacks, women, and younger voters. This left the choice of individual interviewees up to the reporter--it's a non-probability method and by far less likely to be representative. To compound the error, the story says that the interviewer spoke only to people found at home, which further lowers the chances of a representative sample. The intent was good, the execution ill-managed.

The Los Angeles Times would have to be rated low in terms of adherence to the OCR standards, but it manifests an interest in polls and surveys that promises much for the future.

The Milwaukee Journal

The Milwaukee Journal printed nineteen stories about polls and surveys, one of which it conducted itself. The stories averaged an coverage of 3.02 of the ORC

guidelines, quite close to the records of the two previously-discussed papers. (see the tables for additional data.)

Only "by who" appears with any regularity, in all but two of the stories; "when" is missing from six and "who" and "how many" from more than half. "Conduct" and "wording" are next in infrequency, while "selection" and "confidence interval" each appear once. Here again we find those disconcerting stories answering one or none of the ORC questions. And while most of the stories are from presumably reliable sources (particularly Gallup), the paper was certainly not doing its job of checking sources by printing the results of a mail survey by Car-puter International Corporation when the writer seemed to know so little about how the survey was done. The story informed us that Cadillac owners preferred Nixon to McGovern, 2 to 1; clearly a "filler" item, but still worthy of a little critical scrutiny.

As for the Journal's own survey, it consisted of a reporter walking around town announcing to passers-by that he was running for governor and noting their reactions, as the state had no gubernatorial race that year. It was intended to be a humorous article, not a scientific survey. The funniest thing about it was that it answered all of the ORC questions except the last, which didn't apply anyway. Would that the Milwaukee Journal covered serious polls as well as it did this comic one.

The New York Times

The Times ran twenty-two stories on polls and, impressively, four survey-ish stories by its own staff. But the degree of social science knowledge displayed in these stories was a sad disappointment, not at all up to what one would look for from this newspaper. The stories averaged 3.5 in ORC coverage, right down

there with the other papers'. As for the by-question scores, they certainly didn't include all the news that was fit to print.

The only real surprise here was the unusually close attention given to the number of people interviewed, admirable in itself but scarcely enough to meet ORC criteria. "Confidence Interval" also does somewhat better here than elsewhere, thanks to Yankelovitch, who always included it and gave a simple, accurate explanation that should show all reporters how easy it can be.

The Times, together with Time magazine, had Yankelovitch do a series of polls in the sixteen largest states. The reporting of these was uniformly good, with the one problem that they were all done by telephone and the significance of this was never mentioned. The newspaper's interest in surveys was also manifested in its own four stories of this type. Three of them were called "surveys" by the Times, but they appeared to be conventional correspondent's reports from the fifty states, with no evidence that the persons interviewed were scientifically selected. More promising, from the precision journalism viewpoint, was a poll of top businessmen, apparently based on the corporate listings of the New York Stock exchange. Unfortunately, the story didn't say how the individuals concerned were selected, making it difficult to judge the quality of the undertaking. Also missing are "conduct," "when," and "wording" and even worse, there is no operational definition of "top businessmen" given to the reader. It is difficult to believe that if the study had been conducted with an awareness of these factors, they would have been left out of the story.

In terms of pollsters included, this newspaper did a predictably good job, including Harris, Gallup, Field, and a sprinkling of other state polls; but, as the data show, these stories were not reported with any marked concern for procedural factors. The approach is that of an enthusiastic amateur, no more, and it will be interesting to see what progress has been made by 1976.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch ran only thirteen stories on polls, fewer than any other newspaper in this analysis, and conducted no surveys of its own. Its reporting of the eight criteria averaged 3.5, establishing this as the modal value of this study.

In the familiar pattern, "by who," "how many," "when," and "who" do best, though not as well as they ought, while "conduct," "wording," "confidence interval," and "selection" are in the low-to-absent range. There is no point belaboring the problems this suggests, but this newspaper does deserve special criticism for the sheer paucity of poll/survey stories it offered its readers in an election year. Gallup, Harris, and Yankelovitch appear, with an emphasis on Gallup, and so does the Car-puter survey of Cadillacs-for-Nixon, although the organization's name is not given. There is no local or regional coverage whatsoever.

In short, the social science reporting of this newspaper displayed neither quality nor quantity in 1972.

The Washington Post

With a standard twenty-one stories in its pages, the Washington Post does a markedly better job of survey/poll reporting than any other newspaper in this analysis. Its stories covered an average 4.8 of the eight criteria, which may not be wildly impressive, but is decidedly better than 3.5. The other figures reflect this trend.

What immediately catches the eye is the Post's perfect record on "by who." It is rather sad that only one newspaper out of six managed to include such an elementary fact in every story, but the Post must get credit for having done so.

Otherwise, the categories appear in their usual order: "when," "how many," "who," "conduct," "wording," "confidence interval," and "selection" with the usual gap between the top and bottom four. Note, however, that the Post's percentages are higher than any other paper's in all categories but "selection," bad in every paper, and "wording," where the Atlanta Constitution just edged ahead. The general picture is one of consistently better reporting of polls and surveys than any other paper examined.

This superiority is in terms of adherence to the ORC guidelines, not of the pollsters included. Harris, Gallup and Hart divide the story content almost perfectly between themselves; one wonders if the paper didn't have a conscious "equal time" policy. And, in the tradition of the newspaper, there is very little local area coverage. Hart's studies, it will be remembered, were commissioned by the Post and six other newspapers, and they are fine, provocative supplements to the standard polls. Like Yankelovitch, Hart consistently gave his confidence intervals, but Post staff members didn't seem to appreciate the importance of this information, for it did not appear in their other poll stories.

The Post also did two of its own surveys, using that term loosely; unstructured interviews with people in the ten largest states, very similar to the New York Time's project. The stories are lacking by ORC standards and don't appear to be true precision journalism; they are more properly seen as basic newspaper reporting with a vague scientific veneer. The fact is that while the "social science consciousness" of the Washington Post is good in comparison to the other five newspapers', it would not really look very good to a social scientist. This brings us to the final section, a detailed comparison of the six newspapers and a consideration of what the study tells us about the American newspaper.

Comparisons and Conclusions

The table on page seven suggests some interesting generalizations. First, the superior performance of the Washington Post is unquestionable; not only did it earn the highest percentages in six of the seven categories worth comparing, but four of those percentages were substantially higher than those of the second-highest paper. This is particularly true of "how were the interviews conducted?," 54.7% for the Post and 28.9% for the Milwaukee Journal, "when were the interviews conducted?," 90.4% versus 69.3% for the LA Times, and "what was the confidence interval?," 45.2% over 25% for the New York Times. The only category where the Post was bettered, "wording," had a difference of .06%.

In terms of true precision journalism--conducting one's own survey--there was really no "best" performance. In fact, there was no performance at all. The New York Times had the most stories that could be loosely classified in this way, but "loose" is the word. No paper did a genuinely scientific survey and none apparently tried to do one. In 1972, precision journalism was seemingly an idea whose time had not yet come.

There is also no easily defined "worst" paper. If we look at the lowest in-category percentages, they are fairly evenly distributed among the five lower-scoring papers. A straight averaging of each paper's in-category percentages brings the Atlanta Constitution to the bottom with 35.5%, and the Constitution also had the lowest per-story average at 2.8%. But figures don't tell the whole story. When the ORC question coverage of all these papers was so shoddy, why single out one for special blame, particularly when chance might well account for its technically lowest ratings? The Constitution, at least, carried more stories than the Post-Dispatch and gave a degree of local coverage.

More productive is a look at the averages of all six papers' categorical scores. The pattern we've observed all along is repeated here: "by who" (89.7%), "how many" ((68.3%), "when" (66.3%), "who" (47.3%), "conduct" (29.4%), "wording" (23.5%), "confidence interval" (15.9%), and "selection" (1.5%). There must be significance in this priority order, and a hypothesis suggests itself at once.

The key to the matter, I would argue, is that the newspapers are handling poll and survey stories from the perspective of traditional journalism, while ignoring the additional social science perspective these stories demand. Thus, seeing that a poll has been done, the newsman's first concern is its results, not its procedures. Of ORC questions, he is most likely to ask "who did it?," then, perhaps, "how many were polled?," "when was it done?," and, possibly, "who was it of?" The consistently high priority given to who conducted the poll reflects a journalistic premise that reliability depends not on how a poll was done, but on who it was done by. If reliability is questioned at all! And considering the doubtful sources of some of these stories, one might well wonder how often it is.

This approach is wrong for three reasons. First, a blind trust of sources is unworthy of American journalism. You wouldn't see it in other fields, even complicated ones such as the physical sciences. A copy of the ORC guidelines and a single good text on social science research methods could give any reporter a running start, at least showing him the right questions to ask. This being true, there is no good reason for newsmen to have such utter dependence on the gospel according to Gallup. Such dependence is a neglect of their responsibilities to the American people. Polls have become too important to our political process to be taken on faith.

Second, this journalistic perspective has an interesting way of ignoring or neglecting the scientifically vital questions in favor of the less-vital ones. It is a superb irony that the social scientist's probable first question, "How were the interviewees selected?," was answered in only two of the journalists' stories. True, Gallup and Harris are intensely secretive about their detailed procedures, but enough is known of their general methods to so inform the reader. Similarly, the enlightening factor of sampling error is shunned like the plague. The wording of the questions and the method of conducting the interviews are mentioned on the whim of the reporter. The reader is left with no way to judge the reliability of what he's reading, even if he were capable of figuring this out for himself from basic factual information. The newspapers are not only revealing their own inadequacies but passing them on to potentially understanding readers.

Finally, as mentioned before, there is a need to deflate the excessive concern with poll results in our political life. If we realized that all polls are not reliable and that even the best of them are only accurate within a given confidence interval, perhaps we would treat them with less reverence. Not with less respect--properly done, polls are a useful tool of social research--but with a healthy understanding of their limitations. Who could better convey this modified viewpoint than the newspapers themselves?

The point is that to anyone with a passing knowledge of social science, and that is all I have, the uninformed newspaper coverage found in this study undermines one's faith in the realiability and high standards of the American newspaper. To have areas of ignorance is no crime. But to do nothing to correct or acknowledge them is inexcusable, considering the enormous power and responsi-

bility of today's press. American newspapers can do better. There is no inherent tension between journalism and social science; both seek a systematic, thoughtful understanding of the human condition. Their conjunction would benefit us all, giving newspapers the scientific knowledge needed to report--fully and accurately--the day's news.